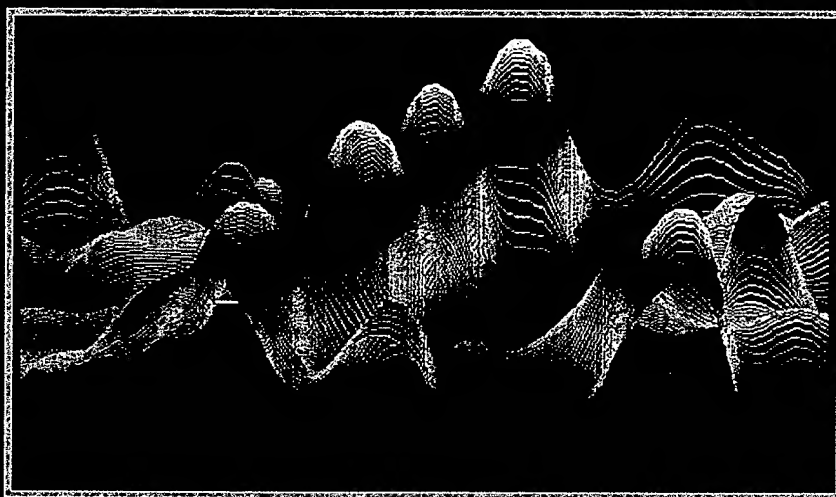


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microgamete (*Biol*) The smaller of a pair of conjugating gametes, generally considered to be the male gamete.

microgametocyte (*Zool*) In Protozoa, a stage developing from a trophozoite and giving rise to male gametes.

microgap switch (*ElecEng*) A switch, used on low-power, low-voltage circuits, which relies for arc extinction on the lateral spread of the arc stream by mutual repulsion between contacts separated by thousandths of an inch.

microglia (*Zool*) A small type of neuroglia cell (occurring more frequently in grey matter than in white matter) having an irregular body and freely branching processes; can be phagocytic.

microglobulin (*Immun*) Any small globulin. Used in respect of Bence Jones protein in urine or of β_2 -microglobulin.

microgram (*Genrl*) Unit of mass equal to one-millionth of a gram (10^{-9} kg). Symbol μ g. Also *microgramme*.

microgranite (*Geol*) A medium-grained, microcrystalline, acid igneous rock having the same mineral composition and texture as a granite.

micrographic texture (*Geol*) A distinctive rock texture in which the simultaneous crystallization of quartz and feldspar has led to the former occurring as apparently isolated fragments, resembling runic hieroglyphs, set in a continuous matrix of feldspar.

microgravity (*Space*) The condition of near-weightlessness induced by free fall or unpowered space flight; it is characterized by the virtual absence of gravity-induced convection, hydrostatic pressure and sedimentation. The term also refers to the scientific discipline which is concerned with the evaluation of processes in a near-zero g environment, particularly fluid physics, life sciences and materials science.

microgyria (*Med*) Abnormal smallness of the convolutions of the brain.

micro-incineration (*Biol*) A technique for examining the distribution of minerals in slide preparations of tissue-sections or cells. The organic material is vaporized by heat and the nature and position of the mineral ash determined by microscopic examination.

micro-instruction (*Comp*) Simple executable instructions wired or built into a computer. Cf *microcode*.

microkernel (*Comp*) The minimum possible collection of processor-specific operating-system functions. Other services like input/output, windows and communications are designed to have multiple personalities which will allow them to run a variety of different software eg Windows, Unix, OS/2 and Mac. A feature of many operating systems under development.

microleththal (*Zool*) Said of eggs containing very little yolk. Cf *megaleththal*.

microlens (*ImageTech*) A CCD array with a microscopic lens over each pixel to increase its light-gathering capacity. For specialized applications the microlenses can be employed in place of a conventional lens.

microlight (*Aero*) Aircraft whose empty weight does not exceed 330 lb (150 kg). In US *ultralight* is used for weights up to 254 lb (115 kg).

microlite (*Geol*) A general term for minute crystals of tabular or prismatic habit, found in microcrystalline rocks. These give a reaction with polarized light.

microlux (*Phys*) A unit for very weak illumination; equal to one-millionth of a lux.

micromanipulator (*Biol*) An instrument used to handle cells seen in a microscope; eg to remove a nucleus or inject RNA. The fine movements are controlled indirectly by pneumatic, mechanical or other means.

micromazia (*Med*) Failure of the female breast to develop after puberty.

micromere (*Zool*) In a segmenting ovum, one of the small cells which are formed in the upper or animal hemisphere.

micromesh sieves (*PowderTech*) See *electro-formed sieves*.

micrometeorite (*Astron, Space*) An extremely small particle found in space, typically of mass less than 10^{-6} g, and diameter less than 10^{-4} m. It does not burn up in the Earth's atmosphere, but drifts down to the surface. Comets are probably abundant sources of new micrometeorites.

micrometer (*Astron*) An instrument which measures small angular separations in the telescope. It consists of three frameworks carrying spider-webs close to the image plane; one is fixed and the others are each adjustable by micrometer heads, by which the separation is read, with a graduated circle giving the angular relation of a double star. See *micrometer gauge*.

micrometer eyepiece (*Biol*) See *eyepiece graticule*.

micrometer gauge (*Eng*) A U-shaped length gauge in which the gap between the measuring faces is adjustable by an accurate screw whose end forms one face. The gap is read off a scale uncovered by a thimble carried by the screw, and by a circular scale which is engraved on the thimble. Commonly *micrometer*.

micrometer theodolite (*Surv*) A theodolite equipped with micrometers instead of the usual verniers for reading the horizontal and vertical circles.

micrometre (*Phys*) One-millionth of a metre. Symbol μ m. Formerly *micron*.

micromicro- (*Genrl*) Prefix for one million millionth, or 10^{-12} ; replaced in SI by *pico-* (p).

micromodule (*ElecEng*) Sometimes said of circuits or components formed from the same crystal of material, eg germanium. An *integrated circuit*.

micron (*Genrl*) Obsolete but still popular measure of length equal to 10^{-6} m, symbol μ . Replaced in SI by *micrometre*, symbol μ m.

micronized coal (*Eng*) Pulverized coal in which >80% will pass through a 40 μ m sieve.

micronucleus (*Zool*) In Ciliophora, the smaller of the two nuclei which is involved with sexual reproduction. Cf *macronucleus*.

micronutrient (*Ecol*) A *trace element* required in relatively small quantities by living organisms; for plants the micronutrients include Fe, B, Mn, Zn, Cu, Mo, Cl. Cf *macronutrient*. See *essential element*.

micropalaentology (*Geol*) The study of microfossils.

micropertite (*Min*) A feldspar which consists of intergrowths of potassium feldspar and albite in a microscopic scale.

microphage (*Zool*) A small phagocytic cell in blood or lymph, chiefly the polymorphonuclear leucocytes (neutrophils). Adj *microphagocytic*.

microphagous (*Zool*) Feeding on small particles of food. Cf *macrophagous*.

microphanerophyte (*Bot*) A phanerophyte, 2-8 m high.

microphone (*Acous*) An acousto-electric transducer, essential in all sound-reproducing systems. The fluctuating pressure in the sound wave is applied to a mechanical system, such as a ribbon or diaphragm. The motion of which generates an electromotive force, or modulates a current or voltage. See *carbon*, *directional*, *electromagnetic*, *hot-wire*, *lapel*, *moving-coil*, *Olson*, *omnidirectional*, *pressure*, *pressure-gradient*.

microphone response (*Acous*) Response measured over the operating frequency range in a particular direction, or averaged over all directions. The characteristic response is usually given by the ratio of the open circuit voltage generated by the microphone to the sound pressure ($N m^{-2}$) existing in the free progressive wave before introducing the microphone.

microphonic (*Electronics*) Said of a component which responds to acoustic vibrations and/or knocks.

microphonicity (*Acous*) See *microphonic noise*.

microphonic noise (*Acous*) Noise in the output of a valve related to mechanical vibration of the electrode system. Also *microphonicity*.

microphotography (*ImageTech*) Photography of normal sized objects, esp documents, plans and graphic

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